

Claims

What is claimed is:

1. A gaming apparatus, comprising:
 - (a) a gaming table with a gaming surface having at least one predetermined location for receiving a gaming token;
 - (b) a gaming token supporter mounted at each of the at least one predetermined location for receiving a gaming token on the gaming surface of the gaming table such that the gaming token supporter is flush with the gaming surface and forms a gaming token receiving location; and
 - (c) a photoelectric sensor for each gaming token supporter, each photoelectric sensor providing modulated light emissions and sensing modulated light, and each photoelectric sensor being mounted to the gaming structure such that each sensor is aligned with and in sensing proximity to a gaming token supporter.
2. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the gaming token supporter forms a portion of a sensor housing.
3. The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the sensor housing comprises a first board having a outer edge and at least one continuous inner edge, the inner edge forming a sensor holder, the sensor holder having dimensions such that a sensor can be received by the sensor holder and the sensor holder positioned such that the received sensor will be aligned and in sensing proximity to the gaming token supporter.
4. The apparatus of claim 3, wherein the sensor is formed by one of a photoelectric sensor and a non-photoelectric proximity sensor.

5. The apparatus of claim 3, further comprising a decoder electrically connected to each sensor for determining whether a gaming token is present at the gaming token location monitored by each sensor.
6. The apparatus of claim 5, wherein the first board comprises a plurality of continuous inner edges forming a plurality of holders, wherein a plurality of lighting devices may be received by the holders
7. The apparatus of claim 6, wherein the lighting devices are connected to the decoder.
8. The apparatus of claim 5, wherein the decoder is a microcontroller.
9. The apparatus of claim 5, wherein the decoder is a hard wired circuit.
10. A gaming apparatus, comprising:
 - (a) a gaming table with a gaming surface having at least one predetermined location for receiving a gaming token;
 - (b) a photoelectric sensor for each of the at least one predetermined location, each photoelectric sensor mounted to the gaming structure such that each sensor is aligned with and in sensing proximity to one of the at least one predetermined location; and
 - (c) a sensor housing for each sensor having a gaming token supporter, herein the gaming token supporter is flush mounted to the gaming surface and forms a gaming token receiving location.
11. The apparatus of claim 10, further comprising a decoder electrically connected to each sensor for determining whether a gaming token is present at the gaming token location monitored by each sensor.

12. The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the sensor housing comprises a first board having a outer edge and at least one continuous inner edge, the inner edge-forming a sensor holder, the sensor holder having dimensions such that the sensor can be received by the sensor holder .
13. The apparatus of claim 3, wherein the first board comprises a plurality of continuous inner edges forming a plurality of holders, wherein a plurality of lighting devices may be received by the holders.
14. The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the lighting devices are connected to the decoder.
15. The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the decoder is a microcontroller.
16. The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the decoder is a hard wired circuit.
17. An apparatus for playing a multi-tiered game, comprising:
- (a) a plurality of gaming tables, each table having a plurality of play positions;
 - (b) wagering areas on the table, with at least one wagering area corresponding to each of the plurality of player positions;
 - (c) a gaming token supporter flush mounted to the gaming surface to form a wagering area;
 - (d) sensor means mounted to the plurality of gaming tables, wherein each sensor means comprises a photoelectric sensor providing modulated light emissions and sensing modulated light, and each photoelectric sensor being mounted to the gaming structure such that at least one sensor is aligned with and in sensing proximity to a gaming token supporter;
 - (e) dealer control means at each table, connected to the sensor means, for determining whether a gaming token is present in each of the plurality of

wagering areas, accumulating the betting information from each plurality of sensor means, and entering data on winning outcomes in the multi-tiered game, wherein the dealer control means includes means for entering a security code prior to entering data on winning outcomes, a plurality of inputs, each input designating one of a plurality of winning outcomes and one of the plurality of player positions at a gaming table of the multi-tiered game; and

(f) computer means operably connected to each dealer control means for continuously accumulating the betting information and winning outcome data for the multi-tiered game, calculating a prize amount for the multi-tiered game, and controlling a display means operably connected to the computer means for displaying the prize amount for the multi-tiered game.

18. The apparatus of claim 17, wherein the plurality of gaming tables is located at different gaming facilities.

19. The apparatus of claim 18, wherein the computer means includes a plurality of facility computers, each facility computer operably connected to a plurality of gaming tables, and a central computer operably connected to the plurality of facility computers.

20. The apparatus of claim 18, wherein the dealer control means, computer means, and display means are operably connected to each other by a local network.

21. The apparatus of claim 19, wherein the display means includes an alphanumeric LED display.